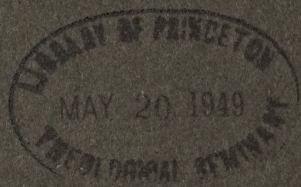


PHILIPSON

JEW IN AMERICA

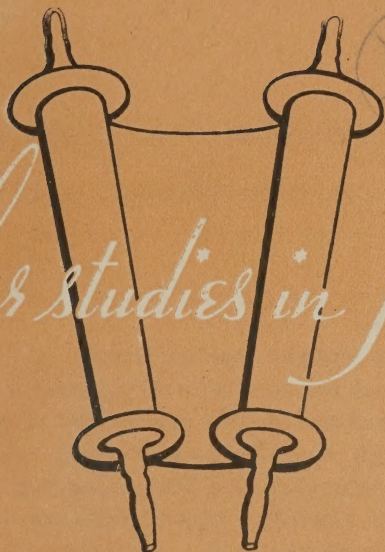
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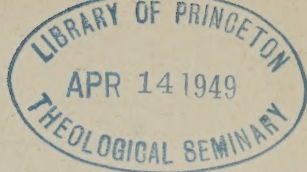
Popular studies in Judaism



THE JEW
IN AMERICA

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BY DAVID PHILIPSON, D.D.



THE JEW IN AMERICA

By RABBI DAVID PHILIPSON, D.D.

THE year 1939 marked the two hundred and eighty-fifth anniversary of the first recorded landing of a group of Jews in this country. While this fact is known to part of the scholarly world through the excellent researches of the American Jewish Historical Society, it is not yet the possession of that multitude which forms public opinion in America. It is not alone to satisfy historical curiosity that the broad masses of America should know this fact—but what is more important, to prevent a great injustice from being done to a faithful and law abiding element in our population. The chaos of the last decade has unleashed evil winds of doctrine such as race superiority. There is festering in America a crude nativist movement that hopes to drive a wedge between sections of our citizenry. This movement is borrowing many catchwords from foreign dictatorships and is malevolently set on building walls between groups arbitrarily labeled as “those who belong” and “those who do not belong.”

This tract is written, firstly, in justifiable self-defense—for the term Jew is all too often coupled with the term “alien” or “foreigner” or those strange “other”

people who ought to go back to the country from which they came.

It will be forgiven us, we hope, if in this plea to consider the record, a note of self-praise may enter. In a fairer climate of opinion than the present turbulent times, we could wait for the facts to percolate of themselves into the mental reservoirs of the American mind. But we live in the midst of that race between education and catastrophe, foreseen by H. G. Wells, and we must, perforce, sacrifice modesty if we are to help the forces of education.

The Jews in the Discovery of America

“Not jewels but Jews were the real financial basis of the first expedition of Columbus,” wrote the late Professor Herbert B. Adams. The Spanish Court, it is well-known, was lukewarm to the whole plan which Columbus laid before it. It would never have reconsidered the proposition were it not for the plea of a secret Jew, a Marrano, one Luis de Santangel. Santangel was a merchant with connections in the leading ports, especially Genoa, the home town of Columbus. He had become a powerful figure at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella. The decisive interview which he held with Queen Isabella is told in interesting detail by the contemporary historian Las Casas in his *Historia de Las Indias*.

The Queen was persuaded by the force of Santangel's arguments to consent to the expedition but pleaded lack of financial resources. Santangel promised to furnish the

resources, and the account books still preserved in the Spanish archives show that he advanced 1,140,000 maravedis to the Bishop of Avila to be credited to Columbus' undertaking. Kayserling translates the item in the account book of May 5, which relates that 1,140,000 maravedis were paid to Santangel for the money, "which he advanced to equip the caravels ordered by Their Majesties for the expedition to the West Indies and to pay Christopher Columbus, the Admiral of the fleet."

Columbus recognized the part Santangel played in making his venture possible. When the explorer had discovered the "Indies," he sent the first tidings to Santangel.

It is certain that the expedition could not have been undertaken if not for certain scientific data and instruments which were supplied by Jews. As Joseph Jacobs writes, "Practically all astronomical tables which were used by astronomers, astrologers, map-makers, and mariners were made by Jews, who also contributed some of the more important Portulani by which the seamen steered. So, too, the chief instruments for taking observations on board, the Jacobs' staff and the new quadrant, were invented by Levi ben Gerson and Jacob ben Makir".

In his reminiscences, Columbus refers to the great help which he derived from the table of Abraham Zacuto, a noted Jewish scholar. Columbus' copy of Zacuto's table with glosses and notes still exists in Spain, and the copy of this work, it must be added, was given

to Columbus by Joseph Vichino, another Jew and a pupil of Zacuto.

Among the men who accompanied Columbus on his epoch-making voyage, the following Jews can be listed:

1. Luis de Torres, who was employed as interpreter for he understood Arabic, Hebrew, and Chaldee.
2. Alonzo de Calle, whose name was derived from the "Jews lane."
3. Roderigo Sanchez, a secret Jew, who took part at the express command of Queen Isabella.
4. Maestro Bernal, the physician.
5. Marco, the surgeon.

It is not surprising that Jews should have been active in such an enterprise as this. They were the bankers and traders of medieval Europe. They were protected by the reigning princes of the time because of their ability to open new avenues of trade through which the feudal villages of Europe were transformed into thriving cities. Since they were forbidden the purchase of real estate, they had ready cash available for such ventures as these. They were vastly interested in geography as becomes a people scattered to the four corners of the earth.

A Dramatic Coincidence

Referring to his expeditions, Columbus recorded in his diary, "After the Spanish monarchs had expelled all the Jews from all their kingdoms and lands in January* in that same month they commissioned me to undertake the

* This is obviously a slip of Columbus' pen. He meant August.

voyage to India with a properly equipped fleet." Columbus refers here to the drastic decree of expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 — prompted partly by the religious fanaticism of the Spanish Queen and partly by the money lust of the King. For the King confiscated the property of the Jews (a practice unhappily imitated by the upstart dictators of our day) and out of these ill-gotten gains, financed the second expedition of Columbus.

On the second of August thousands of expelled Jews set sail from Barcelona for whatever port might receive them. They sailed past the ships of Columbus which on the very next day were to start on that voyage which opened a new home for many of these refugees' children. Perhaps history conspires thus to mitigate the harsh story of man's inhumanity to man. At any rate, the Jews who believe that History is the unfoldment of God's ultimate purpose take solace in the faith that God prepares the remedy even while He is sending the affliction. Spain was lost — America was gained.

Early Jewish Settlers

To escape fanatical monks and greedy monarchs, the Jews came to South America and settled as tradesmen and planters among the native Indians.

They had established prosperous colonies in Brazil while that territory was in the possession of the Dutch. But when the Portuguese wrested this colony from the Dutch and introduced the hated Inquisition, the Jews

had to flee again. Many returned to Europe. But a small contingent of 23 under the leadership of Asser Levy chartered the Santa Caterina and set sail for the Americas of the North. In 1654 (34 years after the Mayflower brought the Pilgrims to Plymouth), the Caterina arrived at New Amsterdam. Shortly before the arrival of this band of Jewish pilgrims, the first Jews known to have arrived at New Amsterdam, came on the ship Pear Tree. These were Jacob Barsimson and Jacob Aboab. It is quite likely that even before this, stray individual Jews may have found their way to some portions or other of the country.

Iron Strikes Flint — Stuyvesant vs. Levy

Imagine the consternation of our little band of 23, when the hard-headed Governor of New Amsterdam, Peter Stuyvesant, refused them permission to land because of their un-Christian religion. The thought of more weary months on the lonely seas, steeled the already strong will of Asser Levy and he refused to accept the Governor's decision until it was confirmed by the directors of the Dutch East India Company in Holland — the colonizing agents. Hard-headed Pete, always a stickler for authority, agreed. He was unpleasantly surprised when, months later, the directors wrote back granting permission for the Jews to remain provided no member of the group became a charge on the public funds. Asser Levy agreed to this condition and the Jews of America have faithfully kept their word, until this last depression.

The Battle for Equal Rights

Levy was not satisfied with mere tolerance. He demanded equal rights for equal responsibility. He forthwith commenced a series of legal suits which kept him before the council committees and local courts the better part of his active life. He conducted more than seventy civil suits in behalf of his co-religionists. A typical cause was his battle against the ordinance of 1655, which refused Jews the right to serve in the militia, but imposed instead a special tax of 65 stivers each per month. While contesting the validity of this law, Levy took his musket and did his guard duty with other citizens until finally the Council rescinded the hated ordinance. The result of Levy's many battles was the granting of complete citizenship to the Jews. It was not until 1727, however, that the General Assembly of New York passed an act removing the last disability of the Jews. This act provided that when a Jew took an oath the words "upon the true faith of a Christian" might be omitted.

Asser Levy not only fought for equal rights for the Jews but fought to keep this country a true haven of religious freedom — a country which, separating church from state, brought a new and larger liberty on the earth.

Pioneer Jews in Other Colonies

In 1658, fifteen Jewish families arrived at Newport, Rhode Island, from Holland. This community grew apace until in time it became very prosperous. In 1763,

it built the handsome synagogue which is still standing. The congregation was disorganized at the time of the Revolution, when a large number of the Jews who sympathized with the patriot cause left the city upon its capture by the British. Aaron Lopez, the foremost member of the community, with seventy others removed to Leicester, Mass., where Lopez founded the Leicester Academy. The President of Yale College, Dr. Ezra Stiles, whose diary contains frequent references to Jews of the eighteenth century, with whom he had cordial relations, wrote the epitaph for the tombstone of Aaron Lopez, who was laid to rest in the Jewish cemetery made famous by Longfellow's poem, "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport."

Mention of Jews in Pennsylvania occurs for the first time in 1657, but there were no Jews in considerable numbers until the following century. The first Jewish name met with in the annals of Philadelphia is that of Jonas A. Aaron, 1703. Jews assembled for religious service in Philadelphia about 1747. There were Jewish settlements elsewhere also in Pennsylvania; Joseph Simon arrived in Lancaster in 1740; Meyer Hart was one of the founders of the town of Easton in 1747; and Aaron Levy arrived in Northumberland County in 1760; he became a large landowner and the town of Aaronsburg, which he assisted in laying out, was named for him.

The interesting character, Dr. Jacob Lombrozo, "ye Jew doctor," is first mentioned in Maryland archives in 1657; he was one of the earliest medical practitioners in

Maryland; letters of denization were issued to him with all the privileges of a native or a naturalized subject; he owned a plantation in Charles County along Naugemy Creek.

The first Virginia settler to be identified as a Jew is Elias Legardo, who has been located as a resident of the colony in 1624-5; he arrived on the "Abigail" in 1621. Notice of another Jew has been discovered in the "York Records" of 1658.

A Jew is mentioned in the colonial records of Connecticut of 1659. Other references to Jews are found in the records of that colony dating from the seventeenth century. For example, an entry of the date September 2, 1661, states "the same day ye Jews which at present live in John March his house have liberty to sojourn in ye town seven months."

Occasional mention dating from the close of the seventeenth century is made of Jews in South Carolina (Simon Valentine, in 1695) but they did not arrive in numbers till after 1740. The first congregation dates from 1750. The Colony in Georgia was settled in the year 1733. In July of that same year a company of forty Jews arrived. Jews may, therefore, be considered as original settlers of the colony; in truth, they constituted one-third of the inhabitants of the colony. The first native Georgian is said to have been Philip Minis, the first child born in the colony. In the general conveyance of town lots, gardens, and farms, executed December 21, 1733, we find among the grantees the names of seven Jews. These

original settlers conducted themselves in such fashion that Georgia's authoritative historian, Charles J. Jones, says of them, in his history of Georgia, "in the record of the Jews of the Colony of Georgia, there is no stain."

The Jew in Defense of His Country

In the cemetery of the Congregation Sherith Israel of New York, there are graves which are visited every Memorial Day by the Daughters of the American Revolution. The graves are graves of Jewish dead and the floral tributes are laid by the Jewish descendants of these dead. In every national cemetery where lie our heroic dead, there are Jewish names, and these names amount to a total in excess of the Jewish proportion to the general population.

We are a people who have learned by bitter experience the folly of war. This tract is sponsored by a religious body dedicated to the pursuit of peace and the blessings of peace. Yet we are part of a common humanity that has fallen short of its ideals and when that humanity insists that ordeal by battle is the only true baptism into full citizenship, the Jew has willingly adopted the ordeal. He had too long been denied a home not to be willing to give the last full measure of devotion for the true boon of American citizenship. Judaism is, in fact, one of the few major religions that make no allowance for conscientious objectors. The defense of one's country is considered both in Biblical and Rabbinic tradition to be a sacred and compulsory obligation.

Here again it has become necessary to gather special data concerning Jewish participation in the wars of this country. Not for self-glorification but to answer slanderous charges made by our detractors. It was to answer a charge made in the *North American Review* in 1891 to the effect that no Jew served in the Civil War, that Simon Wolf of Washington, D. C., compiled the statistics in his book, *The American Jew As Patriot, Citizen, and Soldier*, from which we shall largely draw. The charge was so often repeated that even so fair-minded a man as Mark Twain advised the Jews to organize their own legions to impress their patriotism on the American public. Without resorting to such segregation we hope that our record as part of the armed forces of this country will convince the American public of the utter falsity of such charges.

The first step which led eventually to the War of the Revolution was the signing of the Non-Importation Resolution of 1765 by merchants of the Colonies. Among the signers were nine Jews. Citizens of the Colony of Georgia issued a protest against the blockade of Boston Harbor and taxation without representation. This was signed by the prominent citizens of the Colony. Among the signatures appear the names of two Jews.

Among the foremost citizens of South Carolina at this period was a Jew, Francis Salvador. He was a member of the provincial Congress of the Colony which assembled at Charleston, January 11, 1775. He signed, on the part of the patriots of South Carolina, a compact between

the Tories and patriots. He was also a member of the second provincial Congress which assembled in Charleston in November, 1775. He was killed in an expedition against the Tories and Indians on August 1, 1776.

The records of the Revolutionary army are incomplete. There is no way of discovering how many fought in the Continental army. Of the list of Jewish soldiers whose names have been preserved a large proportion are officers. The names of twenty-seven of these officers are given. It is more than likely that the names of many Jewish privates are unknown, for the number of officers is disproportionately large. Among these officers special mention may be made of Col. David S. Franks, Col. Solomon Bush, Col. Isaac Franks, Major Benjamin Nones, Capt. Jacob de la Motta, Lieut. Abraham Seixas, and Lieut. David Sarzedas.

The company of the Charles Town (Charleston), S. C., regiment of militia commanded by Captain Richard Lushington included twenty-six Jews.

Esther Hays was a Jewish heroine of the Revolution. Her husband, David Hays, was in the patriot army. She was left with her children in her home in Bedford, Westchester County, New York. In July, 1779, Tories entered her home while she was lying ill, and demanded of her information concerning the patriot plans which she was supposed to possess. When she refused, her home was fired. She and her children were saved by a faithful negro servant.

The Jewish congregation of New York, led by its

patriot rabbi, Gershom Mendes Seixas, disbanded when the British approached the city. Rabbi Seixas left New York, and after a brief sojourn at Stratford, Conn., removed to Philadelphia, taking with him the sacred belongings of the synagogue. Quite a number of the patriot Jews who had left New York on the approach of the British had settled in Philadelphia, and desiring to organize a congregation induced Rabbi Seixas to come to Philadelphia for this purpose. He did so and organized with them the Mickve Israel congregation. In 1784 he returned to New York, where he continued to be a prominent figure. He was a trustee of King's College (now Columbia). In 1789 at the inauguration of President Washington he participated in the ceremonies together with thirteen ministers of other creeds.

The Jew Broker of the Revolution

Haym Salomon rendered invaluable financial service to the government during the darkest days of the Revolutionary War. He was the chief individual reliance of Robert Morris, the government's Superintendent of Finance. In Morris' diary, in which he recorded his financial transactions Salomon's name appears seventy-five times. The sums advanced by Salomon in aid of the Government aggregated 200,000 dollars.

Besides the aid rendered the struggling patriot cause, Salomon came to the rescue of prominent statesmen who were in necessitous straits. James Madison, later President, who was a delegate from Virginia to the Congress

sitting in Philadelphia, wrote in 1782, "I have for some time past been a pensioner on the favor of Haym Salomon, a Jew broker." So also it is recorded that had it not been for the aid "administered with equal generosity and delicacy" by Salomon to James Wilson, one of Pennsylvania's most prominent patriots, Wilson would have been forced to leave public service.

The heirs of Haym Salomon made a number of attempts to secure from the Government a settlement of claims for sums advanced by him to the Government. Although committees of both branches of the National Legislature reported favorably to the heirs, no appropriation was made. Finally, in 1893, the heirs agreed to forego their claims if Congress would have a gold medal struck in recognition of Salomon's services. The House Committee to whom this was referred reported favorably, but the House failed to pass the report.

Another Jew, Isaac Moses, helped out Robert Morris by pledging 3,000 pounds to the patriot cause.

Philip Minis advanced 7,000 dollars toward paying the troops of Virginia and North Carolina in the State of Georgia.

The services of the Jews at this critical time, when the whole Jewish population was scarcely three thousand, were referred to by Col. J. W. D. Worthington in 1824 during the deliberations of the Maryland Legislature on the so-called Jew Bill in these words, "*There were many valuable Jewish members, officers principally, in the Revolution from the South chiefly, and these were ever*

at their posts and always foremost in hazardous enterprises."

The Record of Other Wars

Just as Jews fought side by side with their fellow citizens of other faiths in the War of the Revolution, so also were they at the front in all the other wars which have been waged in defense of their country. The list of Jews who fought in the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and the Civil War on both sides, can be found in the book of Simon Wolf, already referred to, while the list of the Jewish soldiers in the Spanish War, which was fought after the publication of this book, is given in the *American Jewish Year Book for 1900-1901*, published by the Jewish Publication Society of America.

Forty-three Jews are recorded in the War of 1812, among them — Brigadier-General Joseph Bloomfield, Col. Nathan Myers, Captain Myer Moses and Mordecai Myers, and Captain Levi Charles Harby, who fought also in the Mexican War and the Seminole War in Florida.

Fifty-seven Jews are recorded in the Mexican War, among them General David de Leon, who received the thanks of Congress twice for his gallantry; David S. Kauffman, aide to Gen. Douglas, who as speaker of the Texas Assembly had advocated annexation to the United States and who served in the United States Congress as representative from Texas from the date of annexation to his death in 1851; Lieut. Henry Selligson who bore

himself so well in the battle of Monterey that Gen. Taylor sent for him and complimented him highly. In Baltimore, a volunteer corps of Jews was organized in July, 1846, for service in this war.

In the Civil War, the records of soldiers who fought on both sides are better kept than in the earlier wars. From these records it appears that over 7,500 Jews fought in the Northern and Southern armies, a larger number in proportion to the number of Jews who were then in the United States, about 150,000 than was furnished by any other religious denomination. Seven Jews received medals of honor from Congress for conspicuous gallantry. Of staff officers who were Jews, forty are mentioned; there were eleven Jewish naval officers. There were nine generals, eighteen colonels, eight lieutenant-colonels, forty majors, two hundred and four captains, three hundred and twenty-five lieutenants, forty-eight adjutants and twenty-five surgeons of Jewish faith. For the Spanish American War, 2,451 Jews enlisted in the army and 42 in the navy. Thirty-two were officers.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Wolf, Gen. O. O. Howard, Major General of the United States Army, wrote,

“I can assure you, my dear sir, that intrinsically, there are no more patriotic men to be found in the country than those who claim to be of Hebrew descent, and who served under me in parallel commands or more directly under my instructions.”

Jewish participation in the World War according to

official record of the United States government issued in August, 1919, was as follows: 114,000 in the army, 13,500 in the navy, 2,200 in the marine corps, and 11,000 in the miscellaneous branches of the service. Of the 114,000 in the army, 24,200 were in the infantry, 7,642 in the artillery, 7,884 in the medical corps, 4,558 in the signal and aviation corps, 2,496 in the engineer corps, 1,239 in the cavalry, 1,385 in ordnance, and 13,264 in other branches. Of the 51,332 remaining, the great majority were in the infantry. As to rank there were 7,929 Jewish commissioned officers in the army, of whom 32 were colonels, and 39 lieutenant-colonels, 340 majors, 1,201 captains, and 4,802 lieutenants. In the navy there were 433 commissioned officers, including one rear admiral. In the marine corps there were 59 commissioned officers including one brigadier-general.

The Hon. Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, during the World War, wrote as follows of Jews in the service:

"In all the branches of the War Department service and in the officer personnel and enlisted ranks of our great army, I have found members of the Jewish race doing their duty — loyal, sympathetic, devoted to their tasks, and intensely patriotic. They showed themselves to be true Americans, than which no higher praise can be given."

The Voice of Our Presidents

The Jew has been a touchstone or co-ordinate of civilization. He has been the unconscious critic of the

times in which he lived. His treatment has been a sort of barometer showing the level of the culture of the people in whose midst he lived. So, too, in the various expressions of sentiment made by our Presidents toward the Jews, we glimpse the state of political morality of the times. As they echo across the years what an indictment they make of the power morality which masquerades as statecraft in Europe today, what a warning to those who would try the false short-cut of dictatorship, what a reassurance of the fundamental rightness of the American Way!

Of Washington

Today the highways of the world are choked with fleeing refugees, men and women exiled from ancient homelands because they differ in race, religion, or opinion from the ruling power. To a world which can permit such savagery it is good to repeat the sage words of our first President which he wrote in answer to a congratulatory message sent by the Jewish Congregation of Newport, R. I., “. . . the true spirit of this government which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, and requires only that those who live under its protection shall demean themselves as good citizens.”

Of Jefferson

Today, in view of the rise to world domination of a state that only twenty years ago pleaded for justice and mercy to the weak, how prophetic are the realistic words

of the sage of Monticello, written to Mordecai M. Noah in reply to a copy of the latter's address at the consecration of the Mill Street Synagogue,

"Your sect, by its suffering has furnished a remarkable proof of the universal spirit of religious intolerance inherent in every sect, disclaimed by all while feeble, and practiced by all when in power. Our laws have applied the only antidote to this vice, protecting our religious as they do our civil rights by putting all on an equal footing. But more remains to be done, for although we are free by law, we are not so in practice."

Of Madison

To those who would inculcate loyalty by the big stick of fear, of concentration camps and exile, the counsel of Madison might be offered. In acknowledging a copy of a discourse delivered by Dr. de la Motta at the consecration of the Synagogue at Savannah in 1820, President Madison wrote,

"Among the features peculiar to the political system of the United States is the perfect equality of rights which it secures to every religious sect. And it is particularly pleasing to observe in the citizenship of such as have been most distrusted and oppressed elsewhere, a happy illustration of the safety and success of this experiment of a just and benignant policy. *Equal laws, protecting equal rights are found, as they ought to be presumed, the*

best guarantee of loyalty and love of country, as well as best calculated to cherish the mutual respect and good will among citizens of every religious denomination which are necessary to social harmony and most favorable to the advancement of truth."

Of Van Buren

When Franklin D. Roosevelt recently protested the German government's treatment of the Jews he followed in the humane steps of President Van Buren, who in 1840 instructed John Forsyth, Secretary of State, to use his good offices with the Sultan of Turkey during the notorious Damascus affair. The Secretary of State wrote :

"The President is of the opinion that from no one can such generous endeavors proceed with so much propriety and effect as from the representative of a friendly power, whose institutions, political and civil, place upon the same footing the worshippers of God of every faith and form, acknowledging no distinction between the Mohammedan, the Jew, and the Christian."

Of John Tyler

Pastor Niemoeller sitting in his dungeon cell, or Cardinal Innitzer witnessing the confiscation of his beloved Cathedral in Vienna might well be troubled over the strange relapses of men, if they read the splendid pronouncement of President Tyler in a letter to Joseph Simpson of Baltimore.

“The United States Government has adventured upon a great and noble experiment which is believed to have been hazarded in the absence of all previous precedent — *that of the total separation of Church and State. No religious establishment by law exists among us. The conscience is left free from all restraint and each is permitted to worship his Maker after his own judgment.* The offices of the government are open alike to all. No tithes are levied to support an established hierarchy, nor is the fallible judgment of man set up as the sure and infallible creed of faith.”

Of Lincoln

To all men in high places who gamble with the peace of the world in order to create a system which makes the weak captive to the strong, the voice of the Great Emancipator must come as a grim chastisement. He who labored to remove the yoke of slavery from the backs of black folk and who accepted the harsh instrument of war to preserve a nation of the people, for the people and by the people — meant *all* the people, *all* of the time.

Lincoln's biographers, Hay and Nicolai, recall the incident when General Grant issued the famous Order Number Eleven expelling Jews from his department. President Lincoln revoked the order the moment it was called to his attention. Although we have not the President's own words, his biographers, Hay and Nicolai refer to the incident as follows: “Lincoln had a profound

respect for every form of sincere religious belief. He steadily refused to show any favor to any particular denomination of Christians, and when General Grant issued an unjust and injurious order against the Jews expelling them from his department, the President ordered it to be revoked the moment it was brought to his notice."

Of Cleveland

In 1904, speaking at the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of the Jews in this country, ex-President Grover Cleveland used these words :

"It is time for the unreserved acknowledgment that toleration and equal opportunity accorded to the Jews of the United States have been abundantly repaid to us. I know that human prejudice — especially that growing out of race and religion — is cruelly inveterate and lasting. *But wherever in the world the prejudice against the Jews still exists, there can be no place for it among the people of the United States unless they are heedless of good faith, recreant to the underlying principles of their free government and insensible to every pledge involved in our boasted equality of citizenship.*"

Cleveland was thinking of the treatment of the Jews in Czarist Russia. He could not possibly have imagined that thirty years later an enlightened nation, a model of cultural progress would have adopted as one of its primary purposes the spreading of anti-Semitic propa-

ganda to every spot on the globe. With prophetic insistence therefore, comes the admonition to this country that "there can be no place among its people for prejudice against the Jews."

Of Theodore Roosevelt

Surely, the retrospect over the life of the Jews in America during the past two hundred and sixty years justified the tribute of Theodore Roosevelt:

"I am glad to be able to say that while the Jews of the United States, who now number more than a million, have remained loyal to their faith and their race traditions, they have become indissolubly incorporated in the great army of American citizenship, prepared to make all sacrifices for the country, either in war or peace, and striving for the perpetuation of good government and for the maintenance of the principles embodied in our Constitution. They are honorably distinguished by their industry, their obedience to law, and their devotion to the national welfare."

Of Taft

When the Russian Black Hundreds perpetrated horrible pogroms in the Ukraine and Crimea, President Taft advised Congress to break the commercial treaty we had concluded with Russia and he instructed our ambassador to the court of Petrograd that no humane government could look with favor on a member of the

family of nations which permitted such acts within its borders. This courageous act served among others to form an American precedent which recently inspired Secretary of State Cordell Hull to levy punitive customs fines on German imports. While faithful to such noble traditions, this country will ever hold aloft the torch of decency, chivalry, and humanity.

Of Wilson

In line with the warm humanity of his predecessors, President Wilson said to the Hon. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., who had been appointed Ambassador to Turkey:

“Remember that anything you can do to improve the lot of your co-religionists is an act that will reflect credit upon America and you can count on the full power of the Administration to back you up.”

Of Coolidge

Appearing before the Dies Committee on subversive activities in Washington, a retired army general made statements concerning the Jews which contained poisonous fabrications and innuendo to the effect that Jews were disloyal, parasitic, international. It must have rejoiced the heart of Paul Joseph Goebbels, Chief of the Nazi propaganda machine, to see how effectively his witches' brew of lies had spread. But these slanderous statements would have grieved the spirit of Calvin Coolidge, who on May 3, 1925, at the laying of the

cornerstone of the Jewish Community Center (not far from the very room in which General Moseley's libelous statements were made) had said:

"It is easy to understand why a people with the historic background of the Jews should overwhelmingly and unhesitatingly have allied themselves with the cause of freedom. From earliest colonial times America has been a new land of promise to this long persecuted race.

"The Jewish community of the United States is not only the second most numerous in the world, but in respect to its old-world origins it is probably the most cosmopolitan. But whatever their origin as a people, they have always come to us, eager to adapt themselves to our institutions, to thrive under the influences of liberty, to take their full part as citizens in building and sustaining the nation, and to bear their part in its defense, in order to make a contribution to the national life fully worthy of the traditions they had inherited.

"Our country has done much for the Jews who have come here to accept its citizenship and assume their share of its responsibilities in the world. But I think the greatest thing it has done for them has been to receive them and treat them precisely as it has received and treated all others who have come to it.

"If our experiment in free institutions has proved anything, it is that the greatest privilege that can

be conferred upon people in the mass is to free them from the demoralizing influence of privilege enjoyed by the few.

“This is proved by the experience here, not alone of the Jews, but of all the other racial and national elements that have entered into the making of this nation. *We have found that when men and women are left free to find the places for which they are best fitted, some few of them will indeed attain less exalted stations than under a regime of privilege, but the vast multitude will rise to higher levels, to wider horizons, to worthier attainments.*”

Of Hoover

President Hoover sent the following greeting to the meeting held at Faneuil Hall, Boston, on the occasion of the 275th anniversary of the settlement of the Jew in the United States of America:

“The Jewish people have brought to this country both the treasures of their ancient tradition and the pioneer spirit which looks forward hopefully into the future. They have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the task of the nation’s upbuilding. In every national crisis they have shown their loyalty and devotion to the home of their choice, and they have made valuable contributions in every worthwhile field of endeavor. I felicitate the gathering of those who celebrate the passing of the 275th year of the Jewish participation in American life.”

Of Franklin D. Roosevelt

President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a statement on the tenth anniversary celebration of the National Conference of Jews and Christians. A portion of the statement is as follows:

“In this nation we proclaim the equal rights of all religious groups, whether of the majority or of minorities, and find our unity in a common citizenship. Freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly are guaranteed to all by the Bill of Rights.

“This American doctrine is challenged or denied in other parts of the world today. It is my earnest hope that divided opinions regarding situations in other lands than ours will not create cleavage between religious groups in our nation. Philosophies dominant in totalitarian States must not be allowed to disrupt the cordial relationships which now exist among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in America.

“The perpetuation of these democratic principles demand, as they deserve, our devotion and sacrifice. We must not hold them too cheaply at a time when they seem to be receding in some quarters where they were once valued. Rather they must be intelligently fostered and bravely advanced.”

Justice to All—The Sure Rock of Government

The Orthodox Jew held to the certain faith that he was destined to immortality through his people whose

mission was eternal. He looked upon the destruction of the great powers that oppressed him as just retribution visited by a God zealous for His Chosen People. We who look upon the Divine plan in less personal and naive terms must, nevertheless, recognize a germ of truth behind this faith. The germ of truth is this: that nations which oppress racial, religious, or cultural minorities are sowing the seeds of their own decay. That power which is held by sheer might is an evanescent power, that order which is imposed by fear is an illusory order, that peace which is the accepted sway of brute force is the peace of death.

If in this hour of their distress, the Jews plead for justice and offer the record of their achievement before the bar of American opinion, it is not alone that *they* may live, but that this country may preserve the Great Society in which *all* may live as men made in the image of God.

Postscript

The story of the internal development of Jewish religious, educational, and philanthropic life is recorded in the widely, ramified activities of synagogues and religious schools, theological seminaries and rabbinical conferences, national congregational unions, and women's organizations, orphan asylums and industrial schools, homes for the aged and the child hospitals and homes for incurables, settlements and educational institutes, publication and historical societies, colonization and agri-

cultural aid associations. It is not the purpose of this essay to rehearse them. The same may be said of the religious currents and cross currents, Reform and Orthodoxy. Nor have we considered it within our scope to list the contributions of individual Jews to the business, the industrial and the professional life of this country; nor to philanthropy, music, education, and every important Reform movement. It may well be that the more enlightened judgment of the future will consider these gifts of peace as equally valuable as the sacrifices of battle. The story of these contributions are the subjects of other essays in this series.

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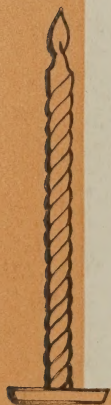


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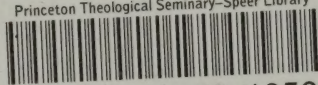
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